

What is a compression vest?

- It is a vest designed to provide deep, gentle pressure through either a tight-fitting, stretchy material or air pressure (inflatable air pockets).
- It is worn over a student's regular clothing.



What student would benefit from a compression vest?

- Students who have difficulty with *self-regulation* (which is the ability to adjust attention, thoughts, behaviours and emotions to meet the demands of a situation)
- Students who have difficulty maintaining attention and sitting still
- Students who demonstrate a need for deep pressure (e.g. difficulty with personal boundaries, frequently falling or crashing on purpose, seeking things to push, pull or climb)

What are the benefits of using a compression vest?

- Promotes calmness
- Reduces restlessness
- Increases concentration and sustained attention
- Promotes body awareness (feeling where your body is in space)

How do compression vests work?

- The deep pressure input is called *proprioception* and can have a soothing effect on a student's nervous system due to changes in the body's biochemistry that this sensation provides.
- The vest provides deep pressure input, similar to that of a hug.

How and when to use compression vests?

- Vests should be used in consultation with an Occupational Therapist.
- Vests should be worn for short periods of time (approximately 15-20 minutes). After 20 minutes, the body accommodates to the deep pressure and the vest may no longer be effective.
- There should be at least an hour break between when the vest is reapplied.
- Vests can be worn during time periods that a student finds most challenging (e.g. sitting still, attending to lessons, seat work or transitions).
- Vests may be effective in helping a student calm down when put on at the initial signs of increased agitation, however, they seldom work when the student is already upset.
- Vests should not be worn during strenuous activities, such as gym or recess, when deep pressure sensation can be achieved in other ways (e.g. pushing, pulling, jumping,

climbing and lifting).

Precautions:

- Vests are not recommended for students under 3 years old.
- Discontinue use of a vest if adverse reactions are observed, such as crying, increased agitation, changes in breathing, colour change, atypical sweating or continually trying to remove it.
- Compression vests should only be used when recommended by an Occupational Therapist who monitors its use and effectiveness.
- Ask your therapist for details or if a trial of a compression vest might be appropriate.